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ABSTRACT

This manual of telephone behavior tips for business and sales professionals offers ways to handle the disgruntled caller and makes suggestions on topics relevant to the telephone. The manual is divided into the following sections and subsections: (1) Common Courtesy (staff tips, answering the telephone, screening calls, transferring calls, taking messages, and eight helpful tips); (2) Nonverbal Communication (physical environment, once upon a time..., don't let posture cramp your style, service with a smile, dress for success, and be heard when you speak); (3) Problem Callers (the complainers, the silent type, how to tame a hostile caller, and how to learn from know-it-alls); and (4) Telemarketing (the telephone as a sales tool, five steps to success, general tips, prospecting, six tips for the initial greeting, introduction to the sales process, setting up sales appointments, ten ways to prepare for objections, cold calling, rejection, and the ten biggest mistakes made). The manual was developed by students in a business communications class. (MG)

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# Total Telephone Tips

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## Introduction

You're looking at this manual wondering if it is worth the time to read or if there is anything contained within worth learning. After all, seen one manual, seen them all.

But wait! Can you answer the following question?

Do I feel totally comfortable everytime I'm on the phone?

At one point in your life, you have probably called someone and had a very frustrating experience. Whether it was someone yelling in your ear blaming you for something you didn't do, or getting no response from the questions you asked, or even getting stuck with someone who couldn't quit talking, you've been frustrated, or worse yet, angry.

The phone has been a source of communication for nearly a century, yet its proper use is still a mystery to many.

For instance, when a disgruntled caller yells or swears over the phone, what did you do? Did you yell and swear back, hang up, or transfer it to someone else. If you did, you probably felt better after this caller was gone, but what did your actions solve? Did you know that an unsatisfied caller on an average will tell 17 people the negative things that happened to him/her.

But if you handled the call professionally and with composure, that same person will tell four people the positive things that happened to him/her. As you see, there can be a lot to gain or lose just by how one handles themself on the phone.

We offer ways to handle the disgruntled caller and suggestions on other topics relevant to the telephone, such as: (1) common courtesy, (2) nonverbal communication, (3) problem callers, and (4) telemarketing.

This manual can be used by managers and secretaries alike. The section on telephone sales can be useful to a company's sales force as a training guide or supplement material already taught.

The following page contains more questions for you:

If you can answer all these questions, then you might not need to read Total Telephone Tips. But the manual can be kept as a ready reference if needed.

If you can not answer all of these questions, Total Telephone Tips is for you.

Is silence really "golden" when conducting a phone conversation?

How much time should one prepare before each call?

Do complainers have legitimate gripes?

Is the integrity of your company at stake when you or your employees are using the phone?

Is active listening a means to success on the phone?

Do the colors of your office affect your thinking?

Is it beneficial to turn the other cheek when you're the target of hostility?

When is the best time to call your doctor? a newspaper, a lawyer?

Does your "sales pitch" carry the punch of Mike Tyson?

Is there anything to learn from the know-it-all customer?

What is the proper way to answer an incoming call?

Can the lighting in your office affect your mood?

When you go to close a sale, do you get the door slammed in your face?

## Common Courtesy

The first and most important fundamental of phone use in business is courtesy. Courtesy can make or break your business. It is the extent of courtesy that represents the reputation and credibility of your company.

There are many phases of telephone courtesy and they must be used interactively (all at the same time). The most important phases of phone courtesy that are included in this chapter are: (1) Staff Tips, (2) Answering the Telephone, (3) Screening Calls, (4) Transferring Calls, (5) Taking Messages, and (6) Eight Helpful Tips.

### Staff Tips

Staff contribute in a major way to the success of the company through their versatility in telephone skills. Handling telephone calls graciously results from the secretary's sensitivity and intelligence combined with training.

Here are a few tips that might enhance staff performance:

* Your secretary should answer your telephone at once. First ring is best, third ring is sloppy.

* A caller should never be put on hold for more than twenty seconds. If the person being called can not get to the phone in time, the secretary should get back on the phone with a response or a polite "Mr. Johnson will call you back shortly."

* If you are not in the office, the caller should be told this before he is asked for his name. Look how much better this sounds:

  "Mr. Johnson's office. No I'm sorry, Mr. Johnson won't return to the city until next Monday. May I ask who's calling, please?"

  Than this: "Mr. Johnson's office. Who's calling, please? No I'm sorry, Mr. Johnson is out of town."

Refrain from making and taking personal calls in the office that are not important or urgent. Such actions look as if your office hasn't any work to dc.

Answering the Telephone

You must realize that the most important element when using the telephone is your tone of voice. The answering voice should be affirmative with a positive attitude. Here are a few key things concerning a positive voice that you should remember:

* Your voice should be warm, pleasant, and easily understood.

* Your voice should invite the caller to make his point, not deter him from calling back in the future.

How you answer your telephone says a lot about you and your company. The manner in which the phone is answered gives important signals to the caller about the corporate character of that organization.

When a staff person answers the telephone it is important for him/her to properly state whom or what the caller has reached. Here are some suggestions as to how you should have your secretaries answer the phone:

"Robert Johnson's office" - Fine, brief and to the point

"Mr. Johnson's office" - Fine (more formal than above)

"Drafting Department" - Fine, if the name isn't important

Your secretary should never answer the phone in this manner: "Mr. Johnson's office, Suzy speaking" - Using her nickname degrades her status.

Better would be: "Mr. Johnson's office, Susan Smith speaking"

When you answer your own telephone it is still important to maintain a respectable level of courtesy. Some key ways to answer your own telephone are as follows:

"Robert Johnson speaking"

"Robert (or Bob) Johnson, Drafting Dept."

You should never answer your own phone in the following manner:

"Bob speaking"

## Screening Calls

The best advice one can give on screening calls is not to do it. When your secretary asks the caller, "May I ask what the call is about?" there is always disappointment and often anger on the other end of the line. The caller feels as though his call is inadequate, unimportant, and unworthy of being heard by the person his call was intended for.
If you have to screen calls, it will be best to organize your screening process in some particular order of importance as follows:

* Make a list of people who must be put through at once, such as immediate family, anyone in senior management, or anyone from the outside who is obviously important.

* Know how to distinguish between emergency situation which must be taken care of right away, or a call which has importance, but by no means needs to be dealt with right away.

* Make a list of people whose calls should be returned within the same day, such as your stockbroker, banker, or someone within the organization who needs assistance of any kind.

* Make an explanation of the type of caller who can be refered elsewhere, which can be determined by asking what the purpose of the call is.

## Transferring Calls

The most delicate part of call-screening is transferring a caller to another party so smoothly the caller is pleased the action was taken. Any caller who is transferred aimlessly loses faith in the company. When a caller is misdirected, it wastes both the caller's time as well as the company's.

Here are some ways which will help a person transfer a call:

* The caller should always be told why he is being transferred elsewhere.

* The caller should always be given the name, title, division, and extension number of the office where he is being transferred. This helps the caller in the event of a disconnection, he will know where to contact the correct party.

* Before the transfer is actually finished, the answerer should make the caller feel that everything is going to be taken care of with a statement such as "It was nice talking to you... I'm sure Mr. Johnson will solve your problem very satisfactorily... I'm really sorry I could not help you, but I'm sure that Mr. Johnson will known what to do."

A good secretary will follow up on important calls transferred during the day, making sure that the caller reached the proper transfer destination, and their problem was solved.

## Taking Messages

The person who can take messages for others effectively and pleasantly is an asset to any organization. Some ways to effectively take messages:

* Get the name, name of the caller's company, telephone number, extension, and area code, if applicable.

* Record the date and time of the call.

* Add your initials on the message so that the person knows who to ask more questions to later.

* Make a request to call back immediately, if the call was an important one.

Eight Helpful Tips

Here are eight tips which will help improve your telephone manners:

1. Do not make a business call unless there is a good reason for it. A telephone call takes up time, time which may be used more productively elsewhere.

2. Try not to call people during office hours at home about business matters which could be resolved later. A majority of people do not like to be bothered with business at home.

3. If by chance you dial a wrong number, apologize sincerely instead of hanging up abruptly.

4. Quickly get to the point of any business call and be brief. If you have to break into the conversation, do so apologetically: "Susan, I have a department meeting starting, so would you mind if we made this a quick call?"

5. Never eat or chew into the mouthpiece. The sounds are greatly magnified and are extremely unpleasant to the other person's ear.

6. Try not to allow background noises in the mouthpiece. It may not distract you, but the sound is magnified and makes it difficult for the other person to hear you.

7. Always give the person you are talking to your utmost attention. Never have side conversations with those around you. This shows the caller that the telephone call must not be very important to you.

8. End your telephone conversations on a pleasant, upbeat note, but refrain from using that tiresome cliche "Have a nice day." Use something more along the lines of "It was nice hearing from you" or "Thank you for filling me in on that important information."

## Nonverbal Communication

Your telephone can be a powerful business tool if you know how to use it. When thinking of nonverbal communication, you may not realize that it also pertains to telephone conversations--a subject that directly relates to all of us.

Chapter 2 of the manual deals with six "body language" aspects of communication which can be applied not only for face-to-face conversations, but while on the telephone. These six topics are: (1) Physical Environment, (2) Timing of the Call, (3) Body Movements, (4) Facial Expressions, (5) Dress, and (6) Vocal Varieties.

### The Power of the Physical Environment

Waking to the tune of "Good Day Sunshine" on his radio alarm clock, Vic got out on the right side of his bed this morning at the crack of dawn. After getting an adequate amount of sleep and feeling well rested, Vic hopped into the shower still singing the tune. Vic proceeded to shave, get dressed, and, with Vicky, his wife of 3 years, have breakfast. As he opened the front door on this bright spring morning, he heard some birds chirping a cheerful melody. "Good day, Sunshine" he said to his wife as he kissed her good-bye, and then drove off to work. He could not get the song out of his head.

When he arrived at work, he greeted all his employees. They all greeted him too, not just because he was their boss, but because he was well-liked and well-respected. His office was decorated in different shades of blue, and had soft, medium-low lighting.

About two hours into his day, Vic received a call from an irate customer by the name of Rocky Terraine, who demanded to speak to the boss. Vic said "Hello" but before he could say anything else, Rocky let loose. He started complaining about the poor quality of his car stereo. When he bought the car from "Happy Motors," he noticed that the tuner did not function correctly. Rocky brought it back for repairs, and one month later, the stereo broke completely, making strange sounds when turned on.

Finding no polite way to interrupt Rocky, Vic looked at his favorite picture on the wall desk of a tall, blue and white

waterfall, and started humming softly that song he couldn't get out of his head this morning. This helped to keep Vic calm and not get offensive. When Vic found the appropriate time to offer a solution, he interjected with offering to replace the stereo at no extra cost. This immediately pleased Rocky. He hung up content, and this little episode did not ruin Vic's day.

Why didn't Vic's day get ruined? How did he stay so happy and not become affected by these negative comments? Could something have influenced his train of thought? Do you think something in his surroundings put him in a certain good mood? We think so. Let's explore some of the factors of the physical environment.

Physical surroundings influence our performance just as much as verbal feedback does. Although it does not guarantee a successful phone call, your physical environment holds certain powers that may alter a conversation and affect your mood and emotions, and support your point. Many factors such as lighting, color, background sound, smell, taste, appetite, temperature, air quality, and changes in the setting, can affect our feelings, both temporarily and permanently.

What can you do to make yourself feel a certain way or condition yourself to give a quality response? Here are some suggestions to fulfill your needs by stimulating your senses and changing your environment.

Stimulation of the five senses is an underlying need that strongly influences your decisions. Two factors that stimulate your sight are lighting and color. Low lighting creates a relaxed and intimate atmosphere which is conducive to social conversation, but may cause drowsiness. It also compliments a woman's make-up. Bright lighting causes fatigue and a desire to escape, and is best for task-oriented activities. Medium lighting is the best way to go.

Common colors are less effective on people, while bright colors show more improvement on employees. Color affects everything from mental abilities to physiological responses. Color also reflects your mood. The following is a list of colors and the moods they convey:

* Red - vitality, excitement, love
* Blue - pleasant, leisurely, calm, tender, secure
* Yellow - unpleasant, exciting, hostile, cheerful
* Orange - exciting, contrary, disturbed, defiant
* Purple - depression, sad, dignified
* Green - cool, pleasant, in control
* Black - intense, unhappy, anxiety
* Brown - neutral, not tender, melancholy
* White - joy, cold, lightness

The sense of smell is also important to satisfy, although it is often overlooked. Just as a woman's perfume seduces a man, the scent of the environment may entice the emotions. Some suggestions to enhance the aroma of your environment are: air fresheners, aroma disk machines, potpourri, and air purifiers. Also, a beautiful bouquet of fresh flowers is a nice added touch.

The ears are alive with the sound of music! Music is a large influence in all of our lives. It has no boundaries and allows for freedom to escape. Music played in the background fills this need while not engrossing all of your mind.

The sense of taste is the most selective of all the senses. When talking on the phone, the need to satisfy your thirst often occurs. Employees may enjoy the benefits of having a snack bar, cafeteria, or kitchen center located in or near the office. Today, these must include a microwave and refrigerator.

While the sense of taste is the most selective, the sense of touch is the most intimate. A comfortable feeling will definitely promote a positive state of mind. Climate control is the key to meeting this need. Air conditioning, heating, and fans are three methods to modifying your climate.

Are you tired of arriving at the same old office day after day? Are you tired of sitting at the same desk, with the same chair, and looking at the same four walls and carpet all the time? Then why not suggest a change! A change in the environment will encourage an increase in an employee's overall performance. This change will also brighten an employee's perception and attention. An increase in efficiency is another benefit that will arise from this new look. Redecorating can revitalize the spirit of cooperation, because a lack of change induces boredom in the workplace.

As a last note to enhance the physical environment, may we suggest a few helpful hints to remain calm and in control, while on the phone:

* Concentrate on soothing picture
* Play appealing music in the background
* Hum your favorite song to yourself
* Post reminders around the room to keep you smiling (e.g. family photos, happy face on telephone, award or trophy)
* Keep desk uncluttered (A cluttered desk signifies a cluttered mind).

Once Upon A Time...

Minnie Skirtz really couldn't understand why Mr. Wheeler could not speak to her right away. He claimed he was on his way to the airport, but she wouldn't fall for that old excuse again. That was just one way a client would "let you down easy", but this time it wouldn't work. She had to be persistent if she wanted to meet today's quota. Minnie really needed this sale, so she continued with her sales pitch, even though Mr. Wheeler was not interested. The phone conversation ended when Mr. Wheeler told Minnie to stay away from him and his company.

> "Time talks. It speaks more plainly than words. The message it conveys comes through loud and clear....It can shout the truth where words lie."
>
> -Edward T. Hall

As stated above, time is a very powerful weapon. In a business call, the time that you make the call is just as important as the words that you use. Although not the most important aspect of a business call, time is a valuable resource and is not to be wasted or taken lightly.

Although the mood of the conversation is not perceived immediately, your efforts to influence the respondent may be biased if the time you place your call is inappropriate to the person you are calling.

Here are some signals to look for that may indicate the effect your presentation can have on your clients:

A Good Time to call:

* The respondent is courteous when he/she greets you.
* The respondent answers your questions openly and with explanations.

A Bad Time to call:

* The respondent answers you with one word responses.
* The respondent comes right out and tells you it is a bad time to call.

If you believe that the call is received at an unsuitable time:

* Explain your reason for the call.
* Ask permission to return the phone call.
* Inform the person of the information you may need at the time of the next call.
* Set a time that is suitable for both parties involved.

Appropriate times to call certain business professionals will be explored in a later chapter.

Don't Let Your Posture Cramp Your Style

Luke Warmwater was just promoted from General Office Clerk to a new sales position in his company. Because he received no formal training in telephone sales, he had a few misconceptions about making a sale. His greatest misunderstanding was that he should have perfect posture when speaking on the phone, which made him feel nervous and unrelaxed. Mr. Johnson (the respondent) sensed these feelings, and in return, felt Luke was interested in only making the sale, not in him as an individual. Mr. Johnson took his business elsewhere and Luke lost the sale.

Some people use certain body movements and positions when speaking on the phone, just as they do in face-to-face conversations. Movements of the hands, pacing, standing up, and lounging around, may attribute to how well you perform while on the phone.

Here are some body movements and positions, and their advantages, that may have helped Luke ease his mind and feel more relaxed.

* Many people believe that using your hands to speak helps in getting your point across. Since using your hands too much while talking can become annoying for other people, and embarrassing for you, it helps to know that these hand movements are not perceived over the telephone. People who like to use their hands when talking, appreciate the invention of headsets and intercoms. Headsets and intercoms provide people with total freedom of movement. Intercoms allow all

people to offer input continuously. These people do not waste time and money by physically passing someone else the phone receiver.

* It is also believed that pacing while on the phone aids in continually motivating you to carry on your train of thought. Pacing also allows you to relieve tension over the phone, which can also be annoying to the other person in face-to-face conversations. We have also concluded that, after talking for a certain amount of time, standing up may help you to close a phone call.

* Over the phone, it is very important that you relax and do not come across to the respondent as nervous. A good way of relaxing in the office is propping your feet up on your desk. It may give you a feeling of control and satisfaction. Most methods of relaxing deal with the way you sit. Whether you sit straight up or slouch, with feet on the floor or up on your desk, you have the freedom on the telephone to do which ever makes you most comfortable.

In conclusion, your posture plays a large role in helping you to close a business deal. The main point here is BE COMFORTABLE. It allows you to feel more at ease with business acquaintances and get you more sales in return.

## Service With A Smile

How do you feel when someone greets you with a smile? Do you smile back? Does it influence you? Although you cannot see someone over the phone, the way you express your mood is perceived by the respondent. Mood expressions may trigger a similar response to your emotions. Here are some expressions that influence the direction your conversation may take:

* Smiling - indicates pleasantness, happiness, smooth flowing conversation, open mind, satisfaction, pride
* Laughing - indicates happiness, interest in you, pleasure, surprise
* Frowning - indicates displeasure, disgust, anger, unhappiness, upset, disagreement, sadness, confusion
* Crying - upset, sympathy, jealousy, grief, fear, loss, downturn of events, utter joy

As you can see, a range of different expressions can encourage the same emotion. Using these different expressions will, in turn, convey a mood which you hope the respondent will receive in a manner that's beneficial to you.

## Dress For Success

> "By and by a proud-looking man about fifty-five ---and he was a heap the best-dressed man in that town, too---steps out of the store, and the crowd drops back on each side to let him come."
>
> - Mark Twain

Do you think the man above feels confident and proud? It is obvious that people can communicate their status, personality, and mood for the day by the way they dress and groom themselves. People are able to communicate attitudes, values, and backgrounds through the clothes they wear. Because of this, your appearance may be considered a form of communication. Because most people are able to modify their appearance, they voluntarily choose to look the way they do.

Most professionals choose to dress in a way that allows them to reflect their status in the business. Though some businesses establish a dress code for their employees, it is done to create a positive public image.

The most important aspect of dressing for success is to be comfortable, while considering the circumstances. This is easier done in the privacy of your own home. While at the office, you may consider some of the following, in order to make yourself more comfortable and more cheerful:

* Take your jacket off
* Loosen your tie
* Roll up your sleeves
* Kick off your shoes
* Wear you slippers
* Let your hair down

Any of the above recommendations may help you to feel comfortable and more at ease while dealing with a customer on the phone. It is important to dress more conservatively and professionally when dealing with customers and colleagues face-to-face.

Be Heard When You Speak

Sandy Eggo's smile, when accompanied by a clear input of air through her nose, required no words to reveal her attitude. Sandy was a sniffer, a great sniffer. She could be heard when she was five offices away. And, to paraphrase Mark Twain, her sniff had power; she could sniff a spider right off it's web from 20 feet away. Sandy always denied her sniffing. One day when her co-worker, Walter Melon, said, "Well, you don't have to sniff about it", she said, "I have something in my passages, and a lady doesn't blow her nose."

Sandy Eggo's sniffing is a form of vocalic. Vocalics include all sounds made by the human voice, other than words themselves. This includes sniffs, sneezes, rapid speech, nasality, and humming.

Your voice is unique. No two people ever sound exactly the same because there are so many different types of voice qualities and vocalizations.

An important voice quality is the pitch of your voice. There are 2 types of pitch: mono and varied. When giving a presentation, mono pitch was found to be less comprehensive and very boring. Varied pitch was found to be more comprehensive and preferred by listeners.

Another important voice quality is the rate that you speak. When a person speaks at a fast pace, it is hard to understand him/her. Because a person speaks at a fast pace, the listeners listen more intently (only if motivated to do so), just to be able to follow the presentation. A slow rate of speaking is preferred by listeners because it is clearer than the fast pace which makes it much easier to understand.

The recommendation here is to use a rate which is in between the fast and slow rates. Speak in a manner which is clear, easy to understand, and easy for your listeners to follow.

## Problem Callers

The telephone has always been a medium by which people communicate their problems. Dealing with problem callers is inevitable in business, but a better understanding of their personalities and suggestions for communicating with them can make phone conversations easier.

This section of the manual deals with four types of problem callers: (1) Complainers, (2) Silent Types, (3) Hostiles, and (4) Know-it-alls. We hope our suggestions will help you better cope with these callers and present yourself in a productive way.

### The Complainer

It's 4:45 p.m. and in 15 minutes it will be quiting time. Suddenly, the phone rings. You pick up the receiver and before you even say hello, the complaints start:

"I called you three times yesterday and left messages with your secretary. Didn't you receive them? Why didn't you call me back? I am a busy person and can't be sitting by the phone. It's bad enough that I'm not satisfied with your product. I can't even reach someone to voice my complaints."

There are four types of complainers. They are usually the most common type of problem caller you may encounter on the phone. They are the "Nark", the "Innocent", the "Smart" and the "Self-righteous."

"Narks" are complainers who constantly complain about someone or something else. Sometimes the problems are genuine, but they do not have the courage to confront that person face-to-face.

"Innocents" are complainers who feel that you control their fate and when something goes wrong, they think its your fault.

"Smart" complainer believe they have ideas of their own. This does not mean that the way something is being done is wrong.

"Self-righteous" complainers are those who complain because they feel that they are always right. They try to support this idea by giving reasons everybody else is wrong.

Do Complainers have legitimate gripes?

Most complainers do have legitimate grips. It is difficult to listen to these people, but when taken care of, they can be a customer for life. You can turn the phone call in your favor if you understand the complainers personality. The following suggestions will help turn complaints into compliments.

* Listen attentively; hear everything without interrupting and passing judgement. Provide oral feedback to let the person know you are listening.
  Ex. "...aha...yes..."

* Establish rapport and a helping attitude.
  Acknowledge their complaint
  Ex. "You're dissatisfied because..."

  Address the caller by name
  Ex. "Mr. Brown, do you feel..."

  Ask questions to gain further clarification.
  Ex. "So it is the alternator you are having problems with and not the gasket?

  Avoid accusation-defense-reaccusation pattern.
  Ex. "Your product did..." "But you didn't follow..." "Yes, but because of your instructions..."

* Formulate a solution.
  Ask what the caller would like.
  Ex. "How would you like to see this resolved, Mrs. Smith?"

  Speak in positives and not placating words.
  Ex. "I am sure we can give you satisfaction..." Right
  "Our company policy states..." Wrong

* Review the solution with them.
  Confirm what the caller would like
  Ex. "Mr. Green, you had started before that you wanted..."

  Be explicit about the next steps to be taken
  Ex. Your complaint will be registered with the home office and brought to the attention of..."

* Follow through.
  State a time period in which their complaint will be addressed
  Ex: "You should be hearing from me in 3 to 4 days..."

The Silent Type

It's 2:30 and you have been cold-calling all day. You start your next phone conversation. "I'm calling in regards to a new product line that our company is introducing. It is compatible with all of our other products and also self-sufficient." (Silence) "How does that sound to you?"

"If it would be convenient, I would like to visit your office and demonstrate it for you and your staff." (Silence) Could you tell me the best time to schedule an appointment? (After a long pause he directs you to his secretary.)

You can get silent customers talking in your favor if you understand their personality traits. Here are the following suggestions to help you turn silence into words of agreement and sales.

The silent unresponsive person can be of the most difficult people to conduct a conversation with on the phone. Following are four types of silent respondents and their characteristics that will help you identify them.

Shy or Timid people are simply frightened of your authority and are afraid that they are about to be reprimanded.

Angry or Disgruntled people use silence as a form of agression. In this way they can get back at you by not responding.

Inferiority people are silent because they feel what they have to say is not important.

"Refuseniks" are people who reject your pitch for a sale or a meeting by not reacting to your comments.

Is silence really golden when conducting a phone conversation?

No, silence is not really golden when trying to cnduct a phone conversation. How is a person supposed to respond to the sounds of silence?

Here are four ways to deal with the silent type:

* Put their fears to rest and help break the tension.
  Directly address their problem
  Ex. "I understand you have a problem and I would like to see what I can do to correct it."

* Ask open ended questions.
  Draw out their opinions and feelings
  Ex. "How do you feel about the situation Mr. Smith?"

  Expand on their one word responses
  Ex. "No, you are totally dissatisfied, or no, you are mildly dissatisfied?"

  Recycle what little they have said
  Ex. "You stated you were frustrated before, can you elaborate on the points upset you the most?"

* Do not fill in their silence with your words and reinforce their silence.
  If need be, you must wait out their silence.

* Remember the clam may be silent, but is always listening to what you say.

How to Tame a Hostile Caller

It's 9:05 and the phone rings. You say "Hello" and the caller starts screaming. "I want to talk to your @#%$& boss right now! This @#$%& product of yours is useless. I listened to your sales presentation at a tradeshow and decided to purchase your product."

"It was the biggest mistake of my life. The product is rotten and the service is just as bad. I waited three weeks for absolute garbage! Let me speak with you boss, now!"

The most intolerable of the four phone personalities presented is undoubtedly the hostile caller. This person attacks your personal character as well as your job function.

There are four characteristics of a hostile caller. They are:

Disagree with you on something that has been done and feel a need to express with anger. This rage can be in the form of vulgarity and verbal abuse. Threats to you or your job are not uncommon.

As sharks react in a frenzy to weakened prey, so do hostile callers feed on you if you are perceived as timid. These people press the attack in hopes of getting you out of the way by fear.

Hostile callers sometimes can attack you without you knowing about it. Subtle jabs concerning you may be directed to one of your superiors.

Some hostile callers can start off very calm, controlling their emotions. However, unknowingly, you set them off on a tirade if they perceive the slightest resistance to their thinking.

It is beneficial to turn the other cheek when you are the target of hostility?

Hostility breeds hostility, so by allowing yourself to turn the other cheek, you are taking the first step in turning their attack into a productive phone conversation.

Here are six ways to counter the hostile customer and work towards a productive end.

* Listen rationally while keeping a cool head.
  Accept the fact they are going to be yelling at you.

* Overcome the urge to argue.
  Do not take their anger personally, even though you are at the focal point of their anger at the moment.

* Do not interrupt them.
  Give them time to run down and slow their momentum.

* Ask questions.
  Use "what" questions, not "why" (to invite response and not accusation)
  Ex. "What happened that..." Good
  Ex. "Why did you..." Bad

* Watch the tone and manner in which you speak.
  Do not give them anything more to be aggressively hostile to by sounding condescending, irritated, or short tempered.

* Use peaceful negotiation.
  Be courteous regardless of prior statements.

Total Telephone Tips (20)

Come to an appeasement the hostile can live with.

Sooth the savage customer with such lines as:

* "I can understand that you are upset..."
* "I am sorry you have had a bad experience..."
* "I am sorry to hear we've let a good customer like you down. I appreciate that you took the time to let me know about this. Your satisfaction is very important to the company. We will certainly try to clear up..."
* "Let's explore our options and look for ways to satisfy both of our needs, and..."
* "I understand what you're telling me and I do see your viewpoint. One thing we may consider doing here is..."
* "I understand your point of view, and there may be another way to look at this. I'd like to consider with you..."

How to Learn from a Know-It-All

Its right after lunch and you return a call to a long-term customer. As soon as they say hello they continually talk. "I want to tell you waht is wrong with your business. All of your secretaries give customers the run around. I have been trying to reach you for three days. Don't bother to cover-up for them. I know what you are going to say."

"You sit in your office while your staff are rude to customers and your new product is defective. The new product has three things wrong with it that a child could notice and yet it went right through your production line of so-called experts."

Managers can better deal with know-it-alls if they can relate to their personalities. Here are the following sugestions to help you learn from the know-it-all.

The know-it-all caller or respondent can respond in the same manner as the hostile person. However, they usually are right to some extent. Problems arise because they will not

listen to advice, thinking they are always right. Thus, the crux of the matter is assisting these people without offending their "superior intellect".

The following are four characteristics of know-it-alls:

They believe that their wellbeing rests completely with them. Therefore, nothing you might say will be taken seriously.

Often when questioned they will overwhelm you with various explanations in the form of statistics. Usually these explanations have little or nothing to do with the question you posed to them.

Some give "expert" opinions on subjects they know nothing about. By doing this they feel more important with other people.

These people get by with some lay knowledge, but eventually run into trouble. They allow themselves to become more involved and eventually fall in over their head.

Is there anything to learn from the know-it-all?

It is debatable whether anything useful can be learned from the know-it-all. However, with this type of personality, it is beneficial to treat them as the expert they think they are.

Here are five ways to address the know-it-all without groveling for recognition of your knowledge.

* Accept the fact that you can not tell them anything.
  Accept that they know it all and want you to realize it.
  Accept that they like to hear themselves talk.

* Know your facts.
  Know definitely what you are addressing.
  Ex. "Your not satisfied with the control panel and not the..."

  Do not speak in maybe's, sort of's, and approximations.
  Ex. "Maybe we can... sort of accomplish...in approximately..."

  Be prepared to have the facts challenged.

Make sure you have adequate back-up material.

Avoid being a counter-expert.
Do not respond patronizingly and with a matter-of-fact attitude.
Ex. "Well, by your knowledge, yes, but the actual fact show..."

* Ask questions in a firm but non-confrontational manner.
Do not phrase questions that are too sketchy and invite the wisdom of the know-it-all
Ex. "The model you bought was the x350 and it is supposed to respond in small grinding sounds. Could you describe the sound you heard to me.?"

## Telephone Sales

The telephone, if used powerfully and efficiently enough, can serve as a forceful sales tool. Mastering the techniques of telephone sales will provide eminently more successful ways of selling your products and services. Topics that will be discussed in this chapter are: (1) Effective Sales Tool, (2) Steps to Success, (3) General Tips, (4) Prospecting, (5) Initial Greeting, (6) Sales Process, (7) Sales Appointments, (8) Objections, (9) Cold Calling, and (10) Ten Biggest Mistakes.

### The Telephone as an Effective Sales Tool

Effective use of the telephone will :

* Improve Territory Coverage
* Facilitate Prospect Qualification
* Confirm Sales Appointments
* Increase Number of Prospects Contacted
* Make Territory Instantly Accessible
* Increase Efficient Use of Sales Time
* Provide More Selling Hours in Each Day
* Provide Direct Contact with the Decision Maker
* Increase Sales
* Increase Income

Five Steps to Success

It is fundamental to stress that the phone is a superior device to use for sales. We will take you through the sales process, step by step, illuminating each section with examples and surefire methods.

To begin, here are 5 steps to success:

1. Every phone call should have a well defined objective. Everything you say should be leading to your goal: An appointment for an on site sales call.

2. Offer the prospect a benefit in exchange for an appointment

3. Don't try to force a sale over the phone. Let the customer set the pace of the call.

4. Be sure to add a thank you at the end of the call.

5. Morning phone calls are traditionally more successful.

In order to be a success over the phone, one of the first things you must do is to organize your thoughts and plans. You should know who you are speaking to and what you plan to get out of the call. In this first section of the sales process, we will give you some tips om how to prepare for the phone call.

General Tips

* Specifically know who your calling

* Outline your intentions or goals for the call

* Determine your clients needs prior to the call. Use surveys, pre-call letters, and questionnaires

* Know the features, benefits, and attractions of the product you are selling

* Be organized and ready to take notes

* Be comfortable at your place of work.

Prospecting

* Determine what type of individual or company constitutes your best prospect.

* Get as much personal background information as possible.

    a. Age
    b. Occupation/Income
    c. Marital Status
    d. Number of Children
    e. Product or Service they Currently Possess

* Research your company's files as to who has purchased the product in the past.

* They are definitely a prospect if they bought your product in the past. So why not again?

When you see your boss in the morning how do yo greet him? The possibilities are endless, but the proper choice cold set the tone for the rest of the day. The same is true for sales calls. Here are six tips to help you make a good first impression.

Six Tips for the Initial Greeting

1. Be friendly, confident, effective, and having a smooth greeting can get you past the screen.

2. Be pleasant and business-like.

3. Speak clearly and in an audible voice.

4. Develop a voice tone of informal importance.

5. Get the secretaries' name and use it in conversation.

6. Use the first name of the contact when speaking to the secretary but switch to surname when speaking to the decision maker.

Introduction to the Sales Process

Ladies and gentlemen, now it's Showtime! We have given you complete organization and preparation, it's finally time to make some money.

This "action plan" for the sales process is what we have nicknamed the "sales pitch". If you are going to give your best, now is the time to do it!

When you start to give the "sales pitch", be confident, cooperative and concise. Remember to stay cool, especially when confronting your clients' objections.

This section is the heart of the manual. It will show you the first thing that must be done in order to keep the clients interest. It will also give several tips and techniques on the "sales pitch" itself. Additionally, we have included helpful hints to build and maintain self-confidence throughout your phone converstaion. Use Total Telephone Tips correctly, and you can become a success!

* Always introduce yourself and your company.
  Use a clear, confident voice.
  Establish a solid base from which to work from.

* Mention the peron's name immediately.
  This creates a more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere.
  Everyone loves to hear their name.

* State the purpose of the call.
  Introduce the product (this is not the pitch).
  Ask for a few minutes of their time.

The "Sales Pitch"

* Stress the benefits of your product.

* Confidence is key.

* Start with your strongest benefit.

* Enthusiasm is contagious.

* Be selective, using the benefits sparingly.

* Let the customer set the pace.

Once you've given the benefits, you must find out just how interested they really are and what they really need.

Questioning is vital in that it:

* It keeps the salesman from talking "too much."
* It allows you to get a feel for what the needs are.
* It establishes rapport through participation.
* It uncovers problems they may be reluctant to tell.

The ability to put your customer at ease is the equivalent of making money. A nervous customer is not a happy customer. Dealing with problems on the phone can be detrimental to your sales efforts. Keep the following suggestions in mind:

6 Softening Statements for the Phone

* "Good question ..."
* "I'm glad you asked me that because ..."
* "That's a good point."
* "That must be important to you. "
* "Yes, of course..."
* "Sure, anything you say, Mr. ..."

5 Reverse Strategies on the Phone

* "If you were me what would you do ? "
* "Let me see if I have this straight..."
* "Would you say it was fair if I said..."
* "Is that a fair statement? "
* "Do you see a way to overcome this situation? "

Using Emotional One-Liners

| Instead of saying... | Use: |
|---|---|
| 1. Providing better service | 1. The pain this benefit will overcome is ..." |
| 2. Does this bother you ... | 2. Are you sick and tired of... |
| 3. A problem that bothers me | 3. What drives me up the wall is ... |
| 4. Hello, I'm calling for... | 4. Hello, I'm calling long distance for... |

When to Call for Certain Types of Jobs

When should you call a clergy member or a grocer? How about a newspaper editor? Believe it or not there are good and bad times to make telephone sales calls. For example, you wouldn't want to call a clergy member on Sunday morning during church services, or a grocer after the store has closed for the night. In short, individual occupations have different peak times when successful sales calls are more likely. Here are the most effective and productive times to call potential, lucrative customers.

| | |
|---|---|
| Executives | After 9:00 am |
| Physicians/Surgeons | 9:00-11:00 & after 4:30 |
| Dentists | Before 9:30 |
| Lawyers | 11:00 to 2:00 & 4:00 to 5:00 |
| Bankers/Brokers | 10:00 to 3:00 |
| Contractors/Builders | 9:00 to 5:00 |
| Professors/Teachers | 7:00 to 9:00 |
| Accountants | Anytime during the day ( Except Jan.15 to Apr. 15 ) |
| Druggists/Grocers | 1:00 to 3:00 |
| Publishers/Printers | After 3:00 |
| Newspaper People | 2:00 to 5:00 |
| Chemist/Engineers | 4:00 to 5:00 |
| Clergy | Tues. through Fri. anytime |
| Government Employees | At Home; Evenings and Sat. |

## Using the Phone to Set Up Sales Appointments

Aside from the major uses we have just described in sales, there are a few related sections which can be important for an effective sales person. Now you will further read on how to make the sales appointment, to prepare for objections & rejections, and learn effective ways to make cold calls, a subject of every sales person's fear.

For some sales professions the purpose of the first call is to simply set up a face-to-face meeting. Many times you can't do anything more to sell your product until you get the appointment. Obviously, the importance of that call is considerable. Here are guidelines that the serious salesman should follow.

* Ask for a specific time and place. Let them know you are setting aside time for them.
* Limit times; this makes it easier for the person to say yes or no.
* Emphasize the importance of the meeting; make them feel important.
* Be considerate, offer transportation, etc
* Confirm appointments. Reduce the risk of no shows by calling to confirm time and place.
* In dealing with the unenthusiastic prospect, try to say something that will interest him and make him more confident in the product.
* No shows: Follow up but don't ask why they couldn't make it. State that you are sorry you missed him and generally describe what he missed.

<u>Positive follow ups may trigger a sale.</u>

10 Ways to Prepare for Objections

Objections are an everyday occurences for most people. But for a sales person, it is often more frequent and quite discouraging. Here are ten ways to prepare for objections and ultimately, increase cash flow.

1. In reality, objections are signs of interest.

2. Meet each objection head on, one at a time, and answer it as honestly as possible.

3. Turning an objection into a reason to buy.

4. Ask the question, "Why?"

5. Don't be detoured by objections. Remain focused on the needs of the prospect.

6. Avoid the objections by being agreeable, such as : "I can appreciate that..." or "I understand..."

7. Make a note card listing positives and negatives.

   For example, when selling life insurance

| Positives | Negatives |
|---|---|
| a. Immediate coverage | a. Not a good short-run return |
| b. Build-up of cash value | b. Cost |

8. Return to the presentation assuming the prospect will buy. If all objections are covered, wrap up the sale.

9. Call at breakfast time. The client is not totally awake yet.

10. Use an attention getter such as a dramatic story or illustration to solve the objection.

Four pause comments that you should use in order to gather your thoughts:

* "Sir, you raise an interesting point, however ..."
* "Mr. _____, you have a valid objection, but..."
* "I appreciate your concern about ( the objection ), but..."
* "Well, here at ( company name ) we have dealt with that problem before, what we do is ..."

Cold Calling

Have you frozen from the thought of calling people you don't know. Cold calling can be a key to your success, or it could freeze you in your tracks. It is a fact that cold calling works. It is important to follow these 8 steps for success.

Fact: Objections to cold callers are never personal.

Eight Steps for Success

1. Select a geographical area.
2. Conduct research to ensure that it is a feasible location.
3. If you haven't conducted cold calling before start gradually.
4. Don't make calls to areas that may not be able to afford the product.
5. Make a list of planned calls so you avoid back-tracking.
6. Tell yourself over and over that you can get sales by cold calling.
7. Ask for referrals even if your unsuccessful.
8. Never forget, Rejections are not meant personally.

Rejection

The fear of rejection can be overcome by simply experiencing rejection and understanding why it happened. Maybe you are lacking confidence. Look at these points to see your road to confidence.

* Once you know what you are afraid of the solution is much easier.
* Tell yourself before you make the call that the person on the other end of the line will benefit from what you are going to say.
* Be confident about this!
* You are doing them the favor. You are giving them professional knowledge and product expertise free.
* Never apologize for calling anyone.

Do's & Don'ts

* Do as much as you can to learn about the product before contacting anyone.
* Do speak and listen properly to the person on the other end.
* Do present your sales presentation professionally.
* Do maintain self-confidence over the phone.
* Don't ever apologize for calling anyone.
* Don't ever give up your determination to succeed.
* Don't ask a question that can be answered "No!"

## 10 Biggest Mistakes Made In Telephone Sales

Many people believe you can't make mistakes, or lose a sale over the phone. However, giving attention to the following items can only increase your ability to make the sale.

1. Using the wrong tone of voice
2. Not getting through to the right person
3. Failure to check the prospects availability to talk
4. Using the wrong rate of speech
5. Telling too much
6. Using the phone for the wrong objective
7. Not offering the prospect a provocative reason for listening
8. Not probing for the prospects needs
9. Assuming you understood the prospect correctly
10. Assuming you were understood correctly

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Total Telephone Tips was developed by students in a Business Communications class as a group project. Phone skills were a consistently mentioned topic that could be vastly improved by everyone. An informal survey of various work places ranging from churches to Fortune 500 companies was taken to determine key areas needing improvement. These areas were researched and reported by teams.

We would like to thank all who participated in the survey and lent us their precious time so that many may benefit. We hope that this manual, indeed, will help all who use it in the future.